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## **HAL Budget Passes Senate**

### ***Fairness in Library Funding Maintained***

LANSING – Sen. Tom George, R-Texas Township, today announced the passage of the conference report for the Department of History, Arts and Libraries' (HAL) budget by the Senate. The new budget proposal increases the funding level of all public libraries by eliminating special grants to the Detroit and Grand Rapids Public Libraries and redistributing the funds statewide. As a result, public libraries in the Kalamazoo Valley will see an increase in funds over the Governor's recommendations.

George successfully argued that the special grants to the Detroit and Grand Rapids libraries could no longer be justified. The Grand Rapids grant, for example, was purportedly to maintain a collection of furniture industry archives.

"Our libraries have unique collections too," George said. "I am pleased to see that my Senate colleagues recognize the importance of all public libraries to the people of Michigan, especially during these tough economic times."

During times of economic strife, library usage is expected to increase as patrons increasingly frequent libraries as they search for jobs or work to improve their skills. By moving dollars from the special grants to the line item funding all libraries, George eliminated the cut the Governor had proposed. Also maintained were the Governor's recommendations on arts funding.